Characters

- WHITE DOC
- PUPILS
- STATUES

Act

The scene is a classroom, bright. A great WHITE DOG--*the teacher--is seated at a great dark desk. Seven girl* PUPILS *are seated at ordinary school desks. They wear white organdy dresses, white socks and black shoes. The PUPILS move stiffly. When the* PUPILS *write, they write with their arms on imaginary tablets. There are three blackboards, stage front, left and right*.

The statues of Jesus, Joseph, Mary, two Wise Men and a shepherd are on a ridge around the room. The statues are highly colored, wooden, and larger than the PUPILS. (*The* WHITE DOG *also appears larger than the* PUPILS.) *Three statues are situated at the front of the classroom, one on each side, and one at the rear of the classroom*.

The DOG *appears to be in a position of a dog begging; great, stiff, white. The actress who plays this role should be costumed as a dog from the waist up*.

The WHITE DOG *sits at the desk. Her speech is unaccom-panted by any movement of the mouth, since she should be wearing what resembles a mask*.

The PUPILS *are seated, backs to audience, facing the* WHITE DOG.

WHITE DOG

(Woman'S voice.)

Lesson I bleed.

(The PUPILS *write in unison with their arms on imaginary tablets. What they write they speak aloud.)*

PUPILS

(Slowly, dully)

I bleed.

WHITE DOG

The day the white dog died, I started to bleed. Blood came out of me.

PUPILS

Teacher, the white dog died, I started to bleed. The white dog died, I started to bleed. Where are the lemons? I am bleeding, Mother.

(They put down their imaginary pens, sit erect with folded hands.)

WHITE DOG

Now, will the one who killed the white dog please come forward from the senate?

(The PUPILS *turn their heads mechanically at each other to see who will come forward; they then turn back to the teacher, erect.)*

Will the one who killed the white dog please come forward ... And Caesar too, the one who killed Caesar.

(A silence. No one moves. Then one PUPIL *raises her hand. The* WHITE DOG *nods recognition.)*

PUPIL

I bleed, Teacher. I bleed. I am bleeding, Mother.

WHITE DOG

(Ignores the PUPIL.)

I said will the one

who killed the white dog please come forward ... And Caesar, at the foot of Pompey's statue ...

(A silence. A PUPIL *raises her hand.)*

PUPIL

I bleed, Teacher, I bleed. It started when my white dog died. It was a charming little white dog. He ran beside me in the sun when I played a game with lemons on the green grass. And it started when I became a woman. My mother says it is because I am a woman that I bleed. Why, Mother, why do I bleed?

(They raise their hands.)

PUPILS

(In unison.)

My mother says it is because I am a woman that I bleed. Blood comes out of me.

(They giggle tensely Then they fold their hands. Silence. The PUPILS *stare at the* WHITE DOG--*the* WHITE DOG *stares at the* PUPILS.)

WHITE DOG

Since we do not know the one that killed the sun, we will all be punished. We will all bleed, since we do not know the one, we will all be punished.

(The PUPILS *stand in the aisle, backs to audience. Silence. They each have a great circle of blood on the back of their dresses. They go stiffly to the three boards, three* PUPILS *at one board, two* PUPILS *at the other two.)*

Write one hundred times, "Who killed the white dog and why do I bleed? I killed the white dog and that is why I must bleed. And the lemons and the grass and the sun. It was at the Ides of March."

(They pick up great white chalk and write on the boards

"Who killed.")

PUPILS

I killed the white dog and that is why I must bleed for Caesar. Dear Caesar.

(They write "I killed." Then the PUPILS *turn and face the* TEACHER. *One* PUPIL *raises her hand. The* WHITE DOG *nods recognition.)*

PUPIL

He ran beside me and the sky was blue and so was Mary's robe.

PUPILS

(In unison.)

This bleeding started when Jesus and Joseph and Mary, the two Wise Men, and my shepherd died, and now Caesar.

(The PUPILS *look up at the statues in the room. The statues are bright.)*

STATUES

(Voices from offstage.)

It started when Jesus and Joseph, Mary, the two Wise Men and the shepherd died. I found their bodies in the yard of my house. One day they disappeared and I found their bodies in the yard of my house tumbled down.

PUPIL

(Raises her hand.)

I played a game with lemons in the green grass. I bleed too, Caesar. Dear Caesar.

PUPILS

My mother says it is because I am a woman.

STATUES

(Offstage voices again.)

That I found the bodies on the grass at the Capitol at the foot of Pompey's statue.

PUPIL

They were the friends of my childhood. I bleed too, Caesar.

(A silence. No one writes. The WHITE DOG *stares at the* PUPILS. *The* PUPILS *stare at the* WHITE DOG. *Then*

the WHITE DOG *stares at the empty desks.)*

WHITE DOG

Calpurnia dreamed. Dear Caesar, I bleed too.

(A silence. The PUPILS *stare at the* WHITE DOG.)

Calpurnia dreamed a pinnacle was tumbling down.

(Another silence. The WHITE DOG *stares at the pupils.)*

Calpurnia dreamed. I am bleeding, Mother. Does no one know where the lemons are? Since no one knows, then we will all bleed and continue to bleed.

(PUPILS *return to their seats, turn and face the* WHITE DOG. *We again see the greater circle of blood on their dresses. They stand silently, then sit and fold their hands. A silence. A* PUPIL *raises her hand. The* WHITE DOG *nods.)*

PUPIL

Does no one know where we played a game of lemons in the sunshine is? Is it in the senate?

(A silence. The PUPILS *stare at each other.)*

SAME PUPIL

Teacher, why does no one know who killed the white dog? Mother, why does no one know? Why doesn't Caesar know who the conspirators are?

(A silence. The PUPILS *stare at each other. The* SAME PUPIL *raises her hand.)*

Teacher, my mother is sending me to the Asylum if I don't stop talking about my white dog that died and my bleeding and Jesus and the game in the green grass. I asked her who made me bleed. The conspirators, she said.

PUPILS

(In unison.)

Who?

SAME PUPIL

The conspirators. And she said everything soon bleeds away and dies. Caesar, too.

PUPILS

Everything. And now Caesar, too. Dear Mother.

(*A silence. The* WHITE DOG *stares at the* PUPILS.)

WHITE DOG

Calpurnia dreamed a pinnacle was tumbling down.

(The PUPILS *stare at the* WHITE DOG; *they fold their hands. Suddenly the* WHITE DOG *raps on the desk. The* WHITE DOG *rises, dims the room [imaginary light], stands in front of her desk.)*

PUPILS

(Loud whispering.)

Calpurnia dreamed ...

(Loud rapid whispering. The whispering stops. The WHITE DOG *starts to walk through the aisles.)*

Dear Caesar played a game of lemons in the sun on the green grass and my white dog ran beside. Jesus and Joseph and Mary, two Wise Men and the shepherd were friends of my childhood. Dear Mother.

(They look up at the statues. They put their heads down. The WHITE DOG *walks and comes to the end of the aisle; stands before the desk. A silence. Heads down. Another long silence.)*

WHITE DOG

Calpurnia dreamed.

PUPILS

(Suddenly lift their heads and say:)

I bleed. I bleed. Ever since I became a woman. I bleed. Like Caesar will I bleed away and die? Since I became a woman blood comes out of me. I am a pinnacle tumbled down.

(Silence. They stand slowly. Their skirts are covered with blood. They stare at the WHITE DOG, *who stares at them. They hang their heads wearily. The stage becomes darker. Then a light comes slowly and fixes on a pupil to the right, rear, a pupil wearing a*

school dress. Her back is to us, her hands folded. Then a light to the WHITE DOG, *who turns slowly about a full circle, revealing a blank human face. She holds a great Latin book. The statues are revealed as statues of Romans. Pupils still stand, skirts covered with bright blood, heads hung. A silence. A bright light.)*

WHITE DOG

And what is the answer? Translate what I read.

(A silence. The PUPIL *raises her hand. The* WHITE DOG *nods recognition. A long pause.)*

PUPIL

(Very slowly, as if translating.)

Calpurnia dreamed a pinnacle was tumbling down.

BLACKOUT